

Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth *day* of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

Ezekiel 1:1



NOT LIKE US
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Christians spend a lot of time talking, writing and reading about the more comfortable, personal aspects of God. And with good reason.

After all, God sent His only Son into the world in flesh, to personally, intimately walk among us, then die for us in a very excruciating, personal, fleshly way. The Bible describes our relationship with God through Christ in comfortable familial terms: Jesus is our “Brother,” God is our “Father,” the church is the “bride” of Christ; the church is described in God’s word not as a business, but as a family. So naturally we would emphasize in our conversation, our classes, our prayers, our sermons—our very thoughts—the warmer, personal aspects of the Godhead.

While we are doing this, however, let us not forget God’s intrinsic otherworldliness. Let us not forget that holy God is not natural, but *supernatural*. On those rare occasions when His glory has been revealed to living mortal man, God’s reality can only be described as downright bizarre to those of earth. And the prophet Ezekiel witnessed, according to his account of God’s glory and attendants, perhaps the strangest sights of all. Regarding the four living creatures that attend God the Father, he writes,

Each of them had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight and their feet were like a calf's hoof, and they gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides *were* human hands. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, their wings touched one another; *their faces* did not turn when they moved, each went straight forward. As for the form of their faces, *each* had the face of a man; all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching another *being*, and two covering their bodies.

Ezekiel 1:6-11

Then Ezekiel describes the mysterious wheels associated with the creatures.

The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship *was* like sparkling beryl, and all four of them had the same form, their appearance and workmanship *being* as if one wheel were within another. Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions without turning as they moved. As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about. Whenever the living beings moved, the wheels moved with them. And whenever the living beings rose from the earth, the wheels rose *also*.

Ezekiel 1:16-19

After this, Ezekiel is witness to the very glory of God.

Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a

throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, *was* a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and *there was* a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw *it*, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.

Ezekiel 1:26-28



Even as we enjoy our personal relationship with Christ Jesus, and through Him with our heavenly Father, we should never lose our holy fear of the blinding, mind-splitting glory of God. Ingrained in our DNA is man's proclivity for minimizing that which brings discomfort—or that which reveals the stark contrast between the good we think of ourselves and the true good of a holy God. We prefer to avoid such disagreeable comparisons.

Our position in Christ notwithstanding, it is healthy and profitable to remember that our God is not like us. We may be created in His image, but that does not mean that He is on our level. Like Ezekiel, like Isaiah, like the apostle John, if we would suddenly find ourselves in His presence we would not grin and reach out a hand to shake His; we would not slap Him on the back and

tell Him a joke; we would not offer our list of nagging questions about this and the other thing. No, in the presence of Father God we would—we one day *will*—fall on our face before Him, overwhelmed by His majesty and blinding holiness. We would be possessed not by our self-importance, but by our abject inadequacy.

Were it not for our Lord and Savior, seated to the Father's right, we would in that moment be reduced to a smoking cinder. Because of Jesus—and Him alone—we will survive the breathtaking, terrifying glory of God.

It is not on *our* righteousness we will stand, but His.